

**Westborough Advisory Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting #30 of FY23  
May 4, 2023**

**DATE APPROVED: May 18, 2023**

**Members Present:** W. Leslie (Chair), G. McMahon (Vice- Chair), M. Barretti, B. Blumberg (Remotely), A. Bradley, J. Clapp, T. Dolan, Jr.

**Not Present:** M. Board, R. Shaffert.

**Others Present:** John Arnold, Town Moderator.

**Call to Order**

Chair Leslie called this Hybrid meeting of the Westborough AFC meeting to order at 7:00 PM Memorial Hall, in Westborough Town Hall. The Chair announced the meeting is recorded and will be conducted in-person and via remote access, in accordance with applicable law. Members of the public body may access these meetings in-person or via remote means using the link posted. When required by law or allowed by the Chair, persons wishing to provide public comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, may do so by accessing the meeting remotely or by in-person attendance. Additionally, meetings are broadcast in real time via Westborough TV, Verizon Channel 28 or Charter Channel 192, or on [www.youtube.com/WestboroughTV](http://www.youtube.com/WestboroughTV).

**AFC organizational updates including new Chair/Vice-Chair, new Member Jane Clapp introduction, and AFC Secretary update**

Chair Leslie reviewed the new AFC member positions; Walter Leslie has been appointed as the new Chair; Gene McMahon has been appointed as the new Vice-Chair. Chair Leslie thanked previous AFC member, Zafar Siddiqui, for his time on the AFC, and welcomed new member, Jane Clapp.

Town Moderator, John Arnold, introduced Ms. Clapp, noting that she has a background in Finance and has been actively attending meetings as a resident. Ms. Clapp discussed her background in municipal budgeting and finance, and in accounting. Mr. Arnold added, as a matter of disclosure, that Ms. Clapp's husband works for the DPW; Town Counsel has opined that there are only a few specific matters in which she will not be able to participate.

Chair Leslie noted that the Town has a verbal acceptance from a candidate for AFC Secretary; she has municipal experience and works in an adjacent community. The meeting minutes will generally be done remotely for efficiency, but she may join an upcoming meeting in-person. Chair Leslie suggested using members' names during the meeting to help the Board Secretary familiarize herself with the AFC members.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Request for AFC Reserve Fund Transfers:**

**AFC for R&R printing expense**

Chair Leslie noted we are approximately \$195 over our budget for printing expenses.

A Motion/Second (**G. McMahon/A. Bradley**) to transfer \$195 from the AFC Reserve to pay for the Curry invoice **was approved 6-0-0.**

**Accounting Dept. for WCRA assessment for active-duty employee.**

Chair Leslie noted that the next transfer is to pay the Worcester County Retirement Assessment as a member of our Town staff is currently on active-duty deployment. Certain portions of the employee's

salary will be covered by the Armed Forces and the Town makes up the difference; the Town's portion for retirement benefits owed to WCRA is \$4,076.

A Motion/Second (**G. McMahon/A. Bradley**) was made to transfer \$4,076 from the AFC Reserve to the Worcester County Retirement Assessment. Chair Leslie confirmed that the current budget is \$210K in AFC Reserve. The motion **was approved 6-0-0**.

(Member B. Blumberg joined the meeting at approximately 7:13 PM.)

**Discussion/debrief of March ATM and AFC process leading up to TM with Moderator John Arnold.**  
**Committee discussion of AFC approach for October STM.**

Mr. Arnold noted that he has been meeting one-on-one with AFC members following Town Meeting in order to solicit candid comments from members; he has also spoken with members of the School Committee and the Select Board, as well as some residents.

**Key Points:**

- Mike Barretti and Walter Leslie are doing a great job running the AFC meetings and keeping up with the meeting minutes.
- Commend the comradery and temperament of the AFC.
- Commend the civil discourse / mutual respect of the Boards and Committees that come in front of the AFC.
- Members of the AFC learn a great deal about the Town.
- Keeping the meetings Hybrid has been beneficial for both members of the AFC and guests, including Town Departments.
- AFC Members should consider reviewing the meeting recording and/or meeting minutes if they are unable to attend a meeting in order to stay caught up with ongoing matters.
- Some key discussions were not held until it was decided to vote; in some situations, voting was done at the end of the process. If a majority of the Committee is ready to vote, the vote can proceed; absent members may ask for a re-vote up until the time recommendation is made on Town Meeting floor.
- If the Committee wants to take a vote and the expected motion is not finalized, it is okay for the Committee to vote on what they want to recommend. If the situation changes, a revote may be taken.
- Themes for the message to voters are well known once the budgets presented. The Committee may want to consider allocating 10-15 minutes at each meeting to discuss themes; possibly creating an evolving draft that is discussed at each meeting.
- Make liaison work as efficient and useful as possible; focus on liaison work during the less busy months.

**Town Meeting Notes**

- The traffic light was considered a very good addition, although some at the podium had issues seeing the light; Mr. Arnold will be looking for a desk top version.
- There was a unanimous consensus that the 9:00 AM start time has benefits but has led to very long days; multiple blocks of 4-5 hour meetings may want to be considered. Electronic voting is costly; they will be looking at other communities for possible less expensive options.
- The Committee may want to consider having proponents and opponents of a recommendation summarize their rationale and include this in the report.
- Mr. Arnold will contact Community Ed or other group to assist in organizing babysitting services during Town Meeting.
- Keep the requested amount of money visible on the screen at all times during the discussion, as a subtle reminder of the amount of money being considered.

- Continue to improve Committee membership's reflection of the community in terms of cultural background, age, gender, etc.
- See if there is a high school student interested in pursuing a degree in Political Science or Government Studies to intern and attend meetings.

Committee Members thanked Mr. Arnold for his comments and feedback.

Chair Leslie noted there are many reasons that someone may not vote in favor, but it may be important to balance in some way why members voted the way they did.

Chair Leslie suggested that the Committee not take votes the night before the booklets are due, and not try and get those votes into the booklets; let them be reported at Town Meeting. Vice Chair McMahon concurred and suggested that when taking votes, members can respond with their vote and their reasoning. The Committee discussed delaying voting to the next meeting to have an opportunity to put together questions.

Chair Leslie noted that the Committee meeting agendas will begin to include process discussions, and get a consensus of some of the goals laid out by Mr. Arnold. The Committee goal is to make good recommendations. Future agendas may want to include the language: *'Deliberation and Potential Voting'*.

**Approval of Minutes: Meetings FY23 #28 on March 23rd and FY23 #29 on March 25th.**

Motion/Second (**G. McMahon, M. Barretti**) to approve the meeting minutes of March 23<sup>rd</sup> (#28), and March 25<sup>th</sup> (#29) as written **was approved 5-0-2 by roll call vote.**

**Yes: Barretti, Bradley, Dolan, Leslie, McMahon.**

**Abstain: Blumberg, Clapp.**

**AFC Liaison Assignments**

- Chair Leslie reviewed the list of Committee liaison assignments; the first seven assignments will go to Mr. Leslie, as Chair.
- Vice Chair McMahon will be the liaison for Council on Aging.
- Chair Leslie will continue as liaison for Library Trustees.
- Mr. Barretti will serve as Economic Development Commission liaison through the remainder of his term.
- Mr. Bradley offered to serve as liaison for MIS/GIS.
- Mr. Bradley will be Fales School Building liaison.
- Mr. Bradley will continue as liaison for Recreation.
- Ms. Blumberg will continue to serve as Clerk/Election Registration liaison.
- Mr. Dolan offered to serve as the Zoning Board liaison, as well as Insurance.
- Ms. Board will continue as Police/Fire liaison/Animal Control.
- Ms. Blumberg will remain as liaison for Assabet Valley.
- Ms. Blumberg will continue as School liaison; Ms. Clapp will be the second School liaison.
- Ms. Clapp will be liaison for Youth and Family Services Youth Commission
- Mr. Shaffert will continue as liaison to DPW/Snow and Ice.
- Mr. Shaffert will serve as liaison to the new Golf Course Building Committee.
- Mr. Shaffer will serve as liaison for Sewer Enterprise and Wastewater Enterprise.
- Active Transportation and Safety Committee liaison – Open.

A Motion/Second (**Bradley/Barretti**) to approve the list of Committee liaison assignments was **approved** with a **7-0-0 vote**.

Yes: Barretti, Blumberg, Bradley, Clapp, Dolan, Leslie, McMahon.

#### **Liaison Reports**

**Mr. Bradley** reported that the Recreation Committee met a couple nights ago; golf season is shaping up well. Mr. Bradley discussed the Senior Needs Survey; there is interest in a Senior Center which could be combined with a potential Recreation Center. They will keep the topic of a Recreation Center on their agenda as a standing item to continue ongoing conversations. The number of lifeguards is up at Lake Chauncy Beach; the Girl Scouts will be putting together a beach toy borrow station.

**Chair Leslie** reported that the Library project was voted as a borrow, and not free cash; therefore, they cannot pay bills until July 1<sup>st</sup>; so there may be a slight delay. There is a repair work schedule and a there is good amount of public interest in the form of meeting attendees.

Chair Leslie announced that on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a seminar held by Town Counsel to review the Open Meeting Law, this would be a good opportunity for those who serve on Boards and Committees. Chair Leslie noted that he has received the monthly appropriation report which includes all budget lines, and where we are at this point in the year.

Chair Leslie noted that he attended his first Finance Team meeting this week; the main topic was the status of the ARPA funds; this will be included in the next agenda.

#### **Future Draft Agenda Items (Next Meeting Dates: June 1, 2023, June 15, 2023)**

ARPA Funds

Dog Park, Including possible matching grant funds

High School Chiller

Splash Pad/Design Study for Future Project

Potential Bus Strike

Shelter Construction Project

DPW Request for Transfer for Snow and Ice

#### **Adjourn**

A motion/second (**M. Barretti/A. Bradley**) to adjourn **was approved 7-0-0** at 8:45PM.

Yes: Barretti, Blumberg, Bradley, Clapp, Dolan, Leslie, McMahon.

#### **Associated Documents referenced during the 5/04/2023 AFC Meeting**

- List of recommendations to the AFC from Town Moderator, John Arnold
- Transfer request AFC reserve (AFC and WRRS)
- March 23, 2023 and March 25, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes
- List of AFC Liaison and Committee Assignments

*Respectively submitted by Laura Clifford*